

who ensure the safety of the maritime industry prepare for these highly technical jobs by meeting requisite training standards. The bill also requires that as new liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminals are approved, all of the resources necessary to adequately secure these terminals are in place. I emphasize that these provisions will not impede the development of any new project. They will simply ensure that security requirements are met before new terminals become operational.

Further, H.R. 2830 will set new and increasingly stringent standards for the treatment of ballast water through which invasive species have been introduced to some of our Nation's most fragile marine environments, such as the Chesapeake Bay. It will also give mariners the right to have cases involving the potential suspension or revocation of their professional credentials heard by the National Transportation Safety Board's administrative law judge system.

These provisions respond to compelling testimony from former Coast Guard ALJs indicating that they did not work in an environment that supported their exercise of judicial independence. Mariners who are unsafe should not be on our Nation's waterways, but fair treatment must be assured to all individuals in any legal proceeding. And the transfer of the Coast Guard's ALJ function to the National Transportation Safety Board will avoid even the potential appearance of unfairness.

Finally, the amendment takes significant new steps to ensure that our Nation's "shield of freedom" resembles the nation it is defending. The bill would require applicants to the Coast Guard Academy to be nominated by Members of Congress or other authorities. This, in conjunction with expanded minority recruiting efforts, would draw students from all of our Nation's communities to the academy, beginning the process that the Commandant himself has said is needed to expand minorities at all ranks of the more than 6,000-member officer corps from the current number of 827.

As chairman of the Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation, it is my honor to be an original cosponsor of H.R. 2830, which will set standards that will ensure the Coast Guard performs at the level it expects of itself while also providing the resources necessary to enable the service to fulfill all of its missions.

Mr. LATOURETTE. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2830, and I'll tell you why in just a second, but just a couple of editorial notes. One is that it is my belief that this Coast Guard reauthorization is brought to the floor in the best traditions of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. And I want to commend the ranking member of our full committee, Mr. MICA, for his

diligence and work, and also for expressing his remaining concerns.

I also want to express my appreciation to the chairman of our subcommittee, Mr. CUMMINGS, who I've had the pleasure now of working with about a year and a half, and I will tell you there is no Member that is more dedicated to not only the mission of the Coast Guard, but the safety of those that they entrust with supervising. It is a pleasure to serve in the post of ranking member with Mr. CUMMINGS as the chairman.

And, also, a special affection for the chairman of the full committee. I made the observation at the beginning of this Congress, and I'll repeat it again today, that obviously, as a Republican, none of us were excited about being thrust after 12 years from the majority party to the minority party, but if there was to be a Democratic Chair of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, there is no one more deserving, in my opinion, perhaps in the history of the institution, than the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR). He really takes our committee, no matter what the issue, above partisanship to the goals of the Transportation Committee, and that is, safeguarding our waterways and building America.

And, lastly, while I'm saying nice things about people, I am pleased, Mr. Chairman, that the Speaker of the House, Mrs. PELOSI, has installed you as the Chairman of the Committee of the Whole for the consideration of this piece of legislation.

I rise in strong support of this bill. And I am especially proud of the ballast water provisions and the marine safety provisions located within the bill.

This bill will establish national standards requiring the treatment of ballast water to minimize the introduction of invasive species into the Great Lakes and other U.S. waters. The bill will build on a lot of work that has already been done. Those of us that are from the Great Lakes know very well the importance of this issue.

I am disappointed that we'll have a colloquy later with the chairman of the full committee relative to an amendment that was offered at the Rules Committee that would protect millions of recreational boaters from falling under a discharge permitting program designed for large oceangoing vessels. In the absence of this language, come September recreational voters will be facing fines of up to \$32,500 a day for violations of program rules. For more than 30 years, Mr. Chairman, both recreational and commercial vehicles were exempted from these programs, and I hope that the majority will join us to develop language addressing these understandings.

As well, when we get to the amendment portion of the bill, I have an amendment that I'm offering with Mr. BOUSTANY of Louisiana that addresses some of the concerns raised by the

ranking member, Mr. MICA, relative to waterside security for liquefied natural gas facilities.

Again, I want to thank the Chair of the subcommittee and the full committee for working with us. I want to thank Mr. BOUSTANY for his dogged work to make sure that we come up with a resolution that not only fits with the reality of assets that are available, builds on a long tradition that we established in 2005, but also permits us to move forward with the goal of attaining cheaper energy for Americans through the form of natural gas.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I thank the Chair very much and would reserve the balance of my time.

The CHAIRMAN. The Committee will rise informally.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. TAUSCHER) assumed the chair.

FURTHER MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A further message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed a bill of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 2903. An act to amend Public Law 110-196 to provide for a temporary extension of programs authorized by the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 beyond April 25, 2008.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Committee will resume its sitting.

COAST GUARD AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2008

The Committee resumed its sitting.

Mr. OBERSTAR. I would like to inquire how much time remains on each side.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from Minnesota has 2½ minutes remaining. The gentleman from Ohio has 9½ minutes remaining.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LATOURETTE. Mr. Chairman, at this time, it is my pleasure to yield 3 minutes to a gentleman I mentioned in my opening remarks, the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. BOUSTANY), who has been a true leader in the House of Representatives on this issue of shore-side and waterside security for LNG facilities.

Mr. BOUSTANY. I want to thank my colleague for yielding time and for his work with me on an amendment to this bill that I think will improve the bill.

I also want to thank the chairman and ranking member of the committee and the ranking member of the full committee for their work in bringing together a good bill.

I rise in support of the bill, but I want to emphasize that our Nation has a growing demand for natural gas, and this amendment that I'm going to offer with my colleague and friend, Mr. LATOURETTE, will help to ensure that we don't halt future domestic liquefied natural gas expansion.